spotting and nurturing talent from early childhood onwards. Besides, Government is proposing to introduce a nation-wide programme entitled, "Panchayat Yuva Krida aur Khel Abhiyan" aimed at providing basic sports infrastructure, and popularizing sports and promoting sports competitions, at the grass-root level by synergizing the network of Panchayats with a network of Youth Clubs and Sports Clubs, including those under the management of the Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan.

Shortage of young players

3964. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there are no young players in the country for any game in the country;

(b) if so, whether due to non-availability of young players only old and outdated players are selected for international matches;

(c) if so, the total number of cricket, hockey, football, volleyball and Kabaddi matches we got defeated and the reasons therefor; and

(d) the reasons for not selecting the young and new players for better performance?

THE MINISTER OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) No, Sir. We are fielding a number of young players in many national and international sports events.

(b) Selections are the responsibility of National Sports Federations, who are required by our Guidelines to undertake such selections in a transparent and fair manner with expert evaluations of the performance of the shortlisted sportspersons. Many of those who are so selected are young sportspersons.

(c) Reasons for both defects and victories are varied and specific to sports disciplines and particular events. These reasons cannot be generalized.

(d) Does not arise as young players are, in fact, being selected on merit.